



Christian Community

A Program Service of the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches, 289 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y., and the Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 2969 West 25th St., Cleveland 13, Ohio

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A Call to the Churches For a Program to Meet the World Crisis

The crisis of our world is due to the widespread loss of faith, the break-up of social orders, and the increasing and confused demands for freedom and justice. Millions of people in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere live under conditions of hunger, disease, ignorance and oppression. Their situation makes them prey to the pressures and false promises of communism. Only the democratic nations of the world can provide the technical assistance and the sympathetic understanding of the social reforms which will give them a rising standard of living and enlarged economic, political, and social freedom. Only the Christian churches can provide the faith and the motivation for these tasks.

We are forced to recognize the inadequacy of military, diplomatic, and economic programs to meet the present need. United military resistance to aggression is necessary but it does not solve the basic problems which are religious, economic, and social. Three additional emphases are imperative.

I. The desires of the peoples for renewed faith must be strengthened through such programs of the churches as evangelism, education and rehabilitation. Not alone by hostility to communism, nor by sheer military force can the world be saved from poverty, exploitation and despair but by a vast spiritual movement that will revolutionize the life of individuals and society.

II. The program of the United Nations to assist underdeveloped regions must be expanded and strengthened. Toward this end, the Point Four program of the United States should be greatly increased in size and scope. These programs should be administered to meet the felt needs of the recipient countries and not as a means for foreign economic and political interference.

III. The efforts of oppressed people to secure freedom and justice must be encouraged and helped. People who suffer under systems of industrial and agricultural exploitation desire economic opportunity more than free elections. Often the extension of social justice is a prerequisite for economic improvement and political freedom.

We, therefore, call upon the ministers, members and agencies of the churches of the United States, especially the National Council of Churches, the foreign mission boards and the agencies for social action, to develop programs of education and action.

- 1) To increase support of missionary programs which meet these critical world needs.
- 2) To support and strengthen the United Nations programs for aid to underdeveloped countries and the Point Four program of the United States;
- 3) To support and strengthen governmental policies which promote civic honesty, social organization and fundamental justice throughout the world; and

Finally, we urge the ministers and members of the churches to encourage the discipline and sacrifice needed to attain these goals, to provide the necessary financial support and the personnel to carry out this far-reaching program and to fulfill the tasks which the God of history has laid before us.

Adopted by the Executive Committee of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches, September, 1950.

Endorsed by the Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, October, 1950.

Summons to Study and Action

By Herman F. Reissig

One of the most encouraging developments of 1950 is the increasing number of voices saying "Stopping Communism is not enough! We must take bold action to meet a world crisis that lies deeper than communism!" The American Secretary of State has said it. The Federal Council of Churches has said it. In an arresting series of booklets, the Public Affairs Institute has been saying it. The Foreign Missions Conference of North America is sure of it. Well known American leaders, such as Vera Micheles Dean, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Walter Reuther, Gerard Swope, and James P. Warburg, are saying it eloquently and often.

In its Message for World Order Day, the Federal Council of Churches put it in ringing sentences. It said:

"Let the voice of our nation be the voice of freedom for the downtrodden, of justice for the impoverished, of release for the oppressed. Let this voice be heard in our pulpits, in the halls of Congress, in the council chambers of the United Nations . . . Where there is need for land reform, for emancipation of racial minorities, for the upholding of human rights and freedoms, for a more equitable distribution of the good things of the earth, for political institutions responsive to the free will of free people, there let the influence of America be felt. As Christians, we are not committed to things as they are but to things as, in the sight of God, they ought to be."

These persons and organizations support United Nations resistance to aggression, but they are unanimous in telling us that the crisis of our time goes deeper than the threat of Russian communism and they urge us to embark upon bold and creative action to meet it.

The Executive Committee of the General

Council of Congregational Christian Churches has now gone on public record. In September it adopted "A Call to the Churches for a Program to Meet the World Crisis." This Call is printed on page one of this issue of CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. It will be published in the November issues of SOCIAL ACTION magazine and of ADVANCE. The General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church has referred to the churches for study a statement which underlines some of the emphases in the Call. We suggest that you turn now to the Call and give it a careful reading.

We shall be surprised if most of the people who read this paper do not agree that the Call's analysis of our crisis is profoundly true and that its summons to action deserves vigorous support in all our churches. In the belief that ministers, social action leaders, and others, will want to do more than merely assent to this statement, we have prepared suggestions for further study and for action. These suggestions are of a preliminary nature. The staffs of the C.S.A. and the C.C.S.A. propose in the coming months to put the viewpoint and program of the Call in the forefront of their speaking and writing. They will help ministers and local committees, as well as our denominational agencies, in every way they can to take this program seriously. We do not hesitate to express the hope that the new National Council of the Churches of Christ, to be inaugurated in November, will give strong emphasis and leadership to the main points made in the Call.

Following the suggestions and the study outline given below, we shall list some of the periodicals, books, and organizations from which our people can get help.

Suggestions for Ministers

The Call contains excellent material for sermons. For example, the first sentence could be taken as the basis for a series of three:

The Nature of the World Crisis

1. Widespread loss of religious Faith.
2. The Breakup of Social Orders.
3. The Demand for Freedom and Justice.

The "three additional emphases" which the Call says are imperative could also be dealt with in separate sermons.

Why not print the Call in the Sunday calendar or parish magazine? Since it is so brief, its reading from the pulpit would be feasible. The minister, if he believes that this is an exceptionally important statement,

could suggest that it be studied in the women's society, the men's club, in adult classes, and at mid-week meetings.

For Denominational Officers

It is hoped that Conference, Synodical, and Association officers will cooperate in making our people acquainted with the Call. If there is enough demand, it will be printed. It would also help if speakers were invited to address denominational meetings on the general theme or on special aspects of it, such as the Technical Aid and Point Four programs. Well-equipped speakers on this latter subject are available in the United Nations, in our State Department, in the Foreign Missions Conference, in the Federal Council of Churches, and in the two denominational social action groups.

Study Outline

The Call covers a great deal of territory—to put it mildly! It is much too compact to make a deep and lasting impression unless its separate statements are broken down, analyzed, and the outlines filled in with details. It is recommended that social action committees and adult groups plan a series of meetings for point by point discussion. Consider the possibility of mimeographing the Call and some such discussion outline as the following:

I. "The crisis of our world is due to the widespread loss of faith . . ."

Is it true that there is a widespread loss of faith?

What is the situation in the non-Christian countries?

Is the Christian faith a controlling influence in countries like France, Italy, Germany, the United States?

Among what groups has there been the most loss of faith? (college graduates, workers, etc.)

What is the relation between loss of faith in God and the receptiveness of large numbers to communism?

II. "The crisis is due to . . . the break-up of social orders . . ."

A social order may be defined as the sum total of the religious, political, economic and cultural institutions which a given people has created. It is a people's "way of life." What different types of social order are there in the modern world? Think of the social order of China (before the communists took over), of France, Great Britain under the Labor Government, Italy, the United States.

Why are the social orders of the Eastern countries going to pieces? Is the break-up the result of communist propaganda or of older and profounder forces? Have Christianity and democracy had something to do with undermining these ancient societies?

What has caused the stresses and strains in the social orders of Western countries, like France and the United States?

What happens when the social order is shaken or goes to pieces:

Would you agree with this statement: Persons who have no conscious, personal faith may live with some degree of stability and serenity if the society in which they live is basically stable. But when a person has no deep personal faith and when, in addition, his whole society seems to be falling apart, then his situation is literally unbearable; and he will often turn to a false faith or movement, simply because he must have something to give him an anchor and a goal.

III. "The crisis is due to . . . increasing and confused demands for freedom and justice."

Why has the demand for justice become so widespread and insistent in recent years? Millions have always been hungry; why are they no longer willing to be quiet about it?

"Millions of people in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere, live under conditions of hunger, disease, ignorance and oppression." Can we Americans, who enjoy such a high standard of living, feel the truth of this—or even believe it? Get the facts behind this broad statement.

Do you think we have a right to ask these millions to be patient? To what extent is their suffering due to lack of natural resources within the country (coal, wood, minerals, articles of food) and how much of it is the result of outright exploitations and of unjust social systems?

IV. "Only the democratic nations of the world can provide the technical assistance and the sympathetic understanding of the social reforms which will give them a rising standard of living and enlarged economic, political, and social freedom."

Why can only the democratic nations do this? To what extent are they do-

ing it now? We are giving some help—through government and through private organizations, including Christian missions. Are we giving enough help—and giving it fast enough?

V. "United military resistance to aggression is necessary . . ."

Is this true?

Do you feel there is a moral difference between the use of military power by the United Nations and its use by one nation?

What do you think would have happened in Asia if the United Nations had not resisted the attack of the North Koreans?

Could the U.N. have survived if it had allowed the government which was set up under its guidance to be conquered?

VI. "Not alone by hostility to communism, nor by sheer military force can the world be saved from poverty, exploitation and despair, but by a vast spiritual movement that will revolutionize the life of individuals and society."

This sentence can be taken as the heart of the statement we are studying. Are the American people concentrating too much on hostility to communism?

Are we tempted to put too much reliance on military power? Are our viewpoint and policies too negative?

If we agree that we must, for the present, have military power, how can we prevent ourselves from putting too much faith in that kind of power?

What about the word "revolutionize"? Is it too strong? Does the life of individuals and of society need to be revolutionized everywhere, or only in some parts of the world?

Many Americans appear to think that our American society is fundamentally all right. What is the Christian answer to this feeling?

VII. "The program of the United Nations to assist underdeveloped regions must be expanded and strengthened. Toward this end, the Point Four program of the U. S. should be greatly increased in size and scope."

The Federal Council of Churches, the Foreign Missions Conference and the leadership of most of our denominations are keenly interested in Point Four. They have published articles on it, talked with government officials

A Statement on American Foreign Policy

The announcement that the United States is proceeding to attempt the manufacture of the hydrogen bomb poses most serious and difficult ethical issues. The proposed hydrogen bomb carries still further the development of weapons of mass destruction. It is hardly conceivable that the development of such weapons and reliance on their use will not have serious consequences on the moral sensitivity and conscience of the nation. Development of such weapons both engenders fear lest potential enemies develop equally or still more terribly destructive weapons and heightens the temptation to put primary reliance on military power.

Such developments should indeed prompt us to put our faith and reliance on God, the Lord of history, of men and of nations. Certainly, such faith, which will keep hope and patience and good will alive is the first requisite of a healthy nation. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

The Christian people of our country can neither be indifferent to the serious nature of the present tensions between

East and West nor can they accept the hopeless position that war is inevitable. They can and should welcome and support a cooperative global program of economic reconstruction and technical assistance. They can and should help to win the confidence of freedom-loving people abroad by showing that we can, through democratic process, guarantee fundamental human rights to all our citizens and provide a healthy and decent standard of living for all.

We should continue to support and seek to strengthen the United Nations and the specialized agencies of international cooperation. We should support fresh efforts to secure an adequate system of international control of atomic and other weapons. Without compromise of fundamental convictions, we can keep the door open at all times for negotiation and continue the search for a viable settlement of differences between nations.

Referred by the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church to the churches for study.

about it, discussed it among themselves. Not in a long time have the churches made such warm response to a program proposed by our government. But it is probably accurate to say that the majority of our people know little about the program.

Just what is Point Four? What is the Technical Assistance program of the United Nations? How are the two related?

Many people feel that Point Four is potentially the most creative proposal now before us, but they are disappointed that the plans are not larger.

What is the responsibility of the churches in this undertaking? Could Point Four be made, on the economic and political side, the heart of a more effective approach to the world crisis?

VIII. "The efforts of oppressed people to secure freedom and justice must be encouraged and helped. People who suffer under systems of industrial and agricultural exploitation desire economic opportunity more than free elections."

An important question is: Just how can we help oppressed people to secure freedom and justice? Obviously, we cannot impose on these people ideas or institutions which they, or their governments, do not want.

In what ways can we encourage their desire for a better social order? Do they now know that the United States sympathizes with their revolt against poverty and exploitation? We say much about believing in free elections for everybody. But many people feel that this makes little impression on the millions for whom physical misery is the big problem. Some first hand observers of life in Asia say that the reports of persecutions and repressions in Russia do not impress many people in Asia. They hear only that Russian communism is against the old orders—and it is the old orders from which they are revolting.

How much moral support and practical help is our country giving to people

who, as one conservative writer said, "live in societies that have got to be changed?"

IX. Consider the last paragraph of the Call. It says that the God of history has laid a task upon us and it asks us to be prepared for greater sacrifices and for

more self-discipline. May it be that in the immediate future we must be prepared to support a program of help to the oppressed which will call on all our personal and financial resources? Do we have here a proposal that is both imperative and deeply Christian?

Materials for Further Study

Magazines: *Social Action* magazine. (15c per copy) November, 1950 issue will carry a full-length discussion of the major points in the Call to the Churches. The October, 1949, issue serves as a valuable introduction to Point Four. "China, Communism, and Christianity", is subject of the June, 1949, issue.

Christianity and Crisis. If you do not subscribe to this paper, your library or your minister may have it. See article by John Bennett on Japan in the April 7th issue. Also the article on "The Crisis of Faith" by Charles Malik in the issue of October 2.

Advance. September issue: "The Age of Anxiety" by Vera Micheles Dean. November issue: "A Program to Meet the World Crisis" by Herman F. Reissig.

New York Times Magazine. October 1, 1950. "Clues to an Understanding of the Far East" by Gerard Swope.

Pamphlets: "A Proposal for a Total Peace Offensive" by Walter Reuther. Order from the Public Relations Department, UAW-CIO, 411 West Milwaukee Avenue, Detroit, Michigan. (Free)

"Our Foreign Policy," Department of State publication. (September, 1950) Especially pages 72-78. Order from Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. (30c)

"Empires End in Southeast Asia". Headline Series booklet of the Foreign Policy Association, 22 East 38th Street, New York, New York. (35c)

"Point Four and the World Economy". Headline Series booklet.

"The Peace the World Wants". An address by Secretary of State Dean Acheson

before the United Nations General Assembly. Division of Public Liaison, State Department, Washington, D. C. (Free) "A Policy and Program for Success" by Anderson and Raushenbush. The Public Affairs Institute, 312 Pennsylvania Avenue, S. E., Washington, D. C. (40c) (There are seven other pamphlets in this "Bold New Program Series." The one mentioned above is the most valuable for the general reader.)

Books: "The United States and China" by John K. Fairbank, Howard University Press, 1948. An excellent book by one of our foremost authorities on China.

"The Vital Center" by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., (\$3.00) Bishop Edward Parsons says: "Dr. Schlesinger has not been proclaiming the Christian faith, but he has given Christians a book of genuine significance as they enlist in the struggle for freedom in the modern world".

"God and the Nations". An excellent symposium, edited by Paul N. Poling. Westminster Press. Paper edition, \$1. The chapter on "The Problems of Security" by Harry Rudin and the chapter on "World Recovery and Point Four" by James Warburg will be particularly helpful.

Sources: Division of Public Information, United Nations, Lake Success, New York. Ask for information on the program of the Technical Aid Administration.

Division of Public Liaison, State Department, Washington, D. C. For information on Point Four.

The Council for Social Action and the Commission on Christian Social Action. For speakers, further materials, and other helps.

Social Action Groups At Work

"Everybody" knows about the United Nations Seminars in New York, but not everybody can get there. The International Relations committee of the Council for Social Action, the Commission on Christian Social Action, the Youth and Pilgrim Fellowships of Ohio sponsored jointly an International Relations Seminar at Lakewood Congregational Church on October 21 and 22. Leaders included Dr. Alfred Hotz, professor of International Relations at Western Reserve University and Prof. Roy Gieselman of Schauffler College as well as the Reverend Messrs. Herman Reissig and Huber Klemme of the social action staffs.

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A Christian Family Institute was held on October 15th at Emanuel Evangelical and Reformed Church, Buffalo, under the auspices of the social action committees of West New York Synod and the Western Association of the New York Congregational Christian Conference. Motion picture and a literature exhibit supplemented discussion groups on pre-marital counseling, marital adjustments, and conflicts between the generations.

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In cooperation with the Council of Churches of Buffalo and Erie County, the Extension Department of the School of Labor and Industrial Relations of Cornell University is offering a course on Labor and Industrial Relations. Running for eight successive Tuesday evenings, the course includes lectures on Human Problems in Industry, Labor History, Management Goals and Practices, Collective Bargaining, and the role of the government.

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The Federal Council of Churches has issued a statement entitled *Equality of Sacrifice: A Christian Approach to Mounting Economic Pressures*. Copies may be secured from the Department of the Church and Economic Life, 297 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y., at five cents each, or \$4 per hundred.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Requests for regular mailings or additional copies for Congregational Christians should be addressed to Ray Gibbons, Director, Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York. Requests by Evangelical and Reformed, and others, as well as news items and communications, should be addressed to the Editor, Huber F. Klemme, Commission on Christian Social Action, 2969 West 25th Street, Cleveland 13, Ohio.